

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS**  
**MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING**  
**June 15, 2005**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Montano called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Chair Montano led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Present:**

Chair Eleanor R. Montano  
Vice Chair Helen H. Stathatos  
Frank Bacio  
Vito Cannella  
Carl Moore  
Maxine Russell

**Absent**

James Cragin  
John Hammargren

**Others Present**

Lee Millen, Senior Staff,  
Commission Services  
Detta Roberts, Commander,  
Sheriff's Department  
Dave Gutierrez, Sergeant,  
Sheriff's Department  
Elizabeth Howard, DCFS  
Kathy New, Probation Department  
Candace Rhue, Auditor

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 2005**

On motion of Commissioner Cannella, seconded by Vice Chair Stathatos and unanimously carried, the minutes of June 8, 2005 were approved with the following changes: **Page 2**, "the ~~Phinnes Pheanes~~ Banning International Culinary Arts School."

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Montano thanked Captain Jay Zuanich, Lomita Station, for providing a copy of the video "Station Feeding and Hygiene for Inmates." The video was presented. Following discussion, Commander Roberts and Sergeant Gutierrez agreed to provide the video they use to orient inmates and staff in food services. Commissioner Moore inquired whether all stations are required to show the video; Commander Roberts agreed to report back to the Commission.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Bacio reported that the balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund is \$818.96.

### **STAFF REPORT**

Lee Millen, Senior Staff, reported the following:

- The conference tables are being refinished and the glass covering will be ordered; and
- Commissioner Russell's nameplate has been ordered.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Chair Montano and Vice Chair Stathatos reported that the Probation Department hosts a prom for the graduating seniors with the best grades and/or that are most improved. Chair Montano and Vice Chair Stathatos attended last year's prom. Chair Montano will be in attendance this year and invited Commissioners to attend; RSVP's are due by June 23, 2005.

### **DEPARTMENT UPDATES ON FACILITY OPERATIONS**

- **Sheriff's Department:** Detta Roberts, Commander, Sheriff's Department, reported that the EIR for the Sybil Brand Institute was completed in 2001; the Asbestos removal was completed in December 1999; and the shoring of the hillside is completed and was paid by FEMA. Commander Roberts noted that Sheriff Baca envisions using the Sybil Brand Institution as a Mental Health Facility for female Inmates. Also, Sheriff Baca is exploring additional options to use and expand on the facility.

Inmate programs are being discussed and the Barbering program has been reviewed. However, due to shortened jail sentences, if the Barbering program is implemented most inmates would not be able to complete the requisite program hours.

In response to Commissioner Moore, Commander Roberts will bring Lieutenant Olson to the next Business Meeting to present an overview on food service preparation.

- **Probation Department:** Kathy New, Probation Department, briefly reported that the Barbering program efforts are ongoing and a full report will be requested from the Bureau for the next Business Meeting. Also, a group home/foster home placement initiative is in force for children 14 years and under; with some exceptions, they are not placed in camps. Ms. New further reported that the inspections of Group Homes are ongoing, and the number of beds for Group Homes will increase starting July 2005. Chair Montano and Vice Chair Stathatos commended the Director and Staff for a first class event at the May 27<sup>th</sup> Probation Awards program.

Commissioner Moore expressed his concerns regarding current racial tensions between some Hispanics and Blacks. Sergeant Gutierrez noted that Twin Tower inmates are housed two per cell in order to prevent potential problems. Consequently, there has not been an increase/decrease in racial tension levels. Ms. New will take back this issue to the Department for review. Commissioner Moore requested a status report on the issue. Also, representatives, agreed to contact Bureau Chiefs for "departmental incident reports".

Commissioner Russell noted her concerns regarding coordination of teachers between Group Homes and the Probation Department, and their proof of valid/current credentials. Liz Howard, DCFS, advised that instruments are in use to gauge the level of educational achievements, needs and services, improvements in areas of education (tutoring and computers) and social skills. This process has been in effect since December 2004, and is stated in the contract.

Further, Ms. Howard noted that if Group Homes/Probation are not abiding by the contract or meeting County standards, another Group Home can be selected. Commissioner Bacio commented that minors in custody have failed academically due to their lack of motivation and substandard life skills experiences. Ms. Howard noted that the Department is in the process of developing a mentoring program to follow the child through the system; Ms. New advised that a mentoring program is also envisioned in the Probation Department. Each representative suggested scheduling a

speaker from their respective departments to present a status report on this program.

- **Auditor-Controller's Office:** In response to Commissioner Russell's, education concerns, Candace Rhue, Auditor-Controller's Office, noted that the Auditor reviews DCFS and Probation's Education Programs, including homework completed and past and current grades.

Chair Montano visited Teens Happy Homes, February 12, 2004, and at the time of the visit some of the recommendations highlighted in the Auditor's report had been addressed, and others not. Commissioner Moore noted that due to the fact that the home is still open, they should be monitored to ensure that the problems are addressed and that they become compliant.

- **Department of Children and Family Services:** Liz Howard, Unit Manager, DCFS Quality Assurance Division, agreed that Teens Happy Homes should be monitored and also expressed interest in reviewing new findings from Chair Montano's re-inspection tomorrow. Since the closure of McClaren Hall the provider community has big concerns that Teens Happy Homes are currently receiving children with higher level of behavioral problems.

Vice Chair Stathatos commented that often providers do not seem to get qualified staff; the contract presented to providers by DCFS is voluminous and more complex, as reported by the facility directors, and social workers' inspections are infrequent and incomplete.

Ms. Howard noted that she will be training providers and social workers on how to complete the contract and will review additional paperwork required.

In response to Vice Chair Stathatos, Liz Howard noted that staff assesses homes for emergency placements, and qualified staff is required to assess the higher RCL. The provider submits an application and the home is inspected, the provider is interviewed, management reviews the application and makes a determination.

Commissioner Moore commended DCFS for providing contract training for providers.

- **Mental Health:** To date, this department has never sent a representative.

Commissioners thanked the department representatives for their invaluable participation and their knowledgeable responses. Commissioners

expressed their sincere desire to assist the departments in their mutual goal of ensuring the safety and well being of the out-of-home placement youth.

## **FACILITY/GROUP INSPECTION REPORTS**

### **Jean Lores Group Home – 60#2**

Commissioner Russell visited this group home on June 14<sup>th</sup> and facility staff reported that the home is to be closed.

Commissioner Russell visited a resident in Metro Hospital and became aware that minors have been assaulted/raped by predators housed there during staff shift changes and rest periods. However, facility staff has advised that some sexual contact is consensual.

Chair Montano directed staff to contact Dr. Southard's office regarding this concern and to provide a representative to attend the monthly business meetings.

### **Teen's Happy Homes #1 – #103-2**

Chair Montano and Commissioner Russell visited this facility on June 14<sup>th</sup> and no one was home. There are serious concerns that the wrought iron security bars on the exterior windows have been nailed shut.

Chair Montano and Commission Hammargren are scheduled to revisit this facility on June 16, 2005.

### **Children Are Our Future – Canoga Park - #14-2**

Vice Chair Stathatos visited this facility on June 9<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**, with no areas of concern observed or reported. All DCFS concerns have been addressed.

### **Children Are Our Future – Granada Hills - #13-3**

Vice Chair Stathatos visited this facility on June 9<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**, with no areas of concern observed or reported. The facility staff reports that the property will be sold as soon as another facility is located.

### **Children Are Our Future – Chatsworth - #12-3**

Vice Chair Stathatos visited this facility on June 13<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**, with no areas of concern observed or reported. Minority Audit recommends some repairs.

### **C&R/Masada Home - #19-2**

Commissioner Bacio visited this facility on June 9<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. Areas of concern: no Life Books for residents; fire extinguishers need to be serviced; and a computer is needed.

### **Family Solutions – #36-2**

Commissioner Bacio visited this facility on June 14<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**, with no areas of concern observed or reported. Commissioner Bacio noted that the facility is replacing the sod; repairing the side wall; replacing the refrigerator in the garage; and is very well organized.

### **NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Montano reminded Commissioners that a photo shoot for the new brochure will take place at next weeks meeting. Also, she assigned inspection duties to Commissioners for the following week.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

### **MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)**

Following discussion on the Department of Mental Health and emergency beds, Commissioner Moore suggested that a memo be directed to Paul Higa, Chief Probation Officer, whether the Probation Department prepares a monthly report that highlights incidents of critical issues within the Department (racial tension, assault on staff, positive/negative incidents).

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Montano adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Twila P. Kerr*

Commission Staff